

THE OLD TIME CHRISTMAS

BY EDWIN L. SABIN



Let's nod a bit before the blaze
Amid the quiet gloam
And live again those Christmas days
Away back there at home.
Seems like the children of these times
Have notions all so great;
The things that cost but cents and dimes
They don't appreciate.

We did. How well I recollect
Our famous Christmas tree—
The grandest pageant, I expect,
That I shall ever see.
We didn't buy it in the town;
We trudged a mile or so
To where it grew and chopped it down
And hauled it through the snow.



I couldn't eat a bite of sup
That Christmas eve—not I
I couldn't sit—was bobbing up
To hang about and spy.
And then when I had done my chores,
With heart right on my lips
I saw it through the folding doors,
Aglow with tallow dips.



The gifts? I got a pair of mitts
By mother knit—bright red,
And father had employed his wits
To build a fine new sled.
An orange—things too small, no doubt,
To suit a modern lad,
But 'twas a Christmas out and out,
The best I've ever had.



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THE CHRISTMAS PIRATES

By CHARLOTTE F. BOLDTMANN

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WE left off sailing our chair ships to fierce and bloodless battles on carpet seas and followed Helen. The daring pirate, knocked from his ship in the excitement, forgot to cry. We all forgot everything but Helen, for she had a secret she would not tell us.

We bubbled over with excitement and desire and eagerness, begging for her story, but she was calm and mysterious and grew in importance as we pressed about her.

We hung about restlessly, watching her every move; we could not play the games so dear to us; we wanted to pounce upon Helen and with brute force make her tell what she knew, but we dared not, fearing never to learn. Mother was preparing to go out, and, feeling sure we should know when she left, we offered to help her—to get her hat, to button her shoes—while she looked at us wonderingly, not understanding our willingness to assist. When she had gone, Helen said nothing, but led the way out of the room, across the hall, up the stairs and into the garret room. The daring pirate again fell, but recovered himself without tears and with a grunt followed on quickly rather than lose sight of Helen.

Finally she stopped before a closet far over on the other side of the house. She waited for all to come up, then opened the door and pointed.

"Santa Claus!" we shouted and were silent with awe. There on the shelf under the rafters stood all the evidences that Santa Claus had been there.

Delight made us speechless, forgetful of all save the joy of seeing before us toys coveted so long. There stood the automobile to carry the doll with pink cheeks and chestnut hair, with eyes that opened and closed, with magnificent silken gown. The drum major's cap was there, the horn that Little Boy Blue would blow, dishes for the little mother, a sword and a gun for the fierce pirate, a nodding elephant, a bleating sheep, bats and balls,

ships and sleds, books, skates and a theater for our dolls.

Still we were silent. The daring pirate brought his chair ship and, climbing into it, captured the shelf's cargo. Automobile, doll, dishes, gun, balls, sheep, elephant, books, skates and all came down. We scrambled for them, silently tearing them from each other's fingers. Each gained a treasure especially coveted and became absorbed in it, forgetting time and place and all else but that the longing to possess at last was satisfied.

Below stairs a door slammed, caught by the wind. We jumped to our feet in an agony of fear. No one must find us here. We snatched the toys from the little ones, sending them away in a flood of tears. We put the toys back

in their places and went below stairs. The little ones chattered excitedly, but we tried to quiet them, impressing upon them that Santa had left these gifts for Christmas and would take them away if any one found out. We all agreed never, never to tell; we promised not to peep into the closet, not even to go up to the garret from then until Christmas.

We returned to our play, wishing to act as though nothing had happened. No one spoke of our secret, but the suppressed excitement in the air made us forget our piratical battles. We feared for the little ones too.

In the morning the little ones came whispering, begging us to go upstairs, but we dared not, fearful to let them see more. Yet nothing we did would quiet them, and we were afraid of an outburst of tears. Mother looked at us with suspicion, not knowing why we whispered, and we did not dare to keep it up lest she should question us and learn from the little ones what we had done. So we told them Santa Claus had taken the toys away, and if we were very, very good and never spoke of them again he would bring them back on Christmas eve. Satisfied, they began to play in the usual way. We played, too, hoping to forget, but could not. When the little ones took their afternoon nap, we started for the garret to take one peep, but were bidden to stay downstairs. We longed for a sight of our treasures. One glimpse would make us happy, we felt sure, but we could not get it and hung about, uneasy and hard to please. We asked questions about Santa Claus and what he would bring, hoping to learn which toys would be our own, but we were answered evasively and told to wait until Christmas. When night came, mother sent us early to bed, judging from our action we were sick. We tried to sleep, but could not, thoughts of the treasures over our heads keeping us awake. We got together and whispered, longing for a sight of the new toys, and, knowing that all were safely asleep, quietly took the night candle and crawled up the garret stairs to the cupboard. Again the sight filled us with longing. Again the daring pirate, aloft in his chair ship, took down one after the other, and in the delight of their possession we lost ourselves and played and played until the crowing of the cock warned us to our beds.

Next morning we slept long, and mother again feared some sickness. We could not eat breakfast; we were feverish and excited. We jumped at any unusual noise. We had no heart to play and were glad when again she sent us early to bed.

Each night we played in the garret and each day longed for night to come, yet dreading to be found out. One day when a neighbor commented on the nightly light in our garret we grew faint and white and breathlessly wait-

ed for mother's answer. To our relief she merely smiled and said Santa Claus needed a light sometimes. But as for us we were careful to keep the light from the window after that.

It was the week before Christmas. We began to stow up again. Our former fear of mice in the garret engulfed our desire to see the new toys. Their charms were beginning to fade; no longer we cared for the automobile that carried the doll with pink cheeks and chestnut hair, with eyes that opened and closed, with magnificent silken gown, nor for the drum major's cap, nor the horn that Little Boy Blue would blow, nor the dishes for the little mother, nor the sword and the gun for the fierce pirate, nor the nodding elephant, the bleating sheep, bats and balls, ships and sleds, books, skates, the theater for our dolls.

The grownups began to get mysterious and to talk often of Christmas and the joys it would bring, but we grew sadder and sadder as it approached, for it could bring no surprises for us. We missed the joy of anticipation, and for the first time in our lives we learned what sorrow meant. A realization of the wrong we had done came home to us. We would have given anything to undo it, but could not, for nothing would make it right. Mother bustled about weeping to make it a happy Christmas, yet she worried over us, dosing us with medicines and tea she thought would help us. But they did us no good, for we could not know it was the guilty conscience rather than the body that needed healing. Those bitter doses filled our cup of woe almost to overflowing, yet we took them rather than tell the truth, for we had solemnly vowed she must never know. We agreed to cheer up and be happy, and when she was there we played at pirates, but had not the heart necessary to victory and generally lost to the little ones. Each day we looked more miserable and became paler and thinner and less inclined to eat. Tears came easily to our eyes, and in those times life was full of misery.

On Christmas eve we were silent and listless. We tried hard to be lively and full of expectation for the coming day, but did not deceive mother, who sent us early to bed, giving us an extra strong dose of the bitter medicine. We tried to beg off, but she made us take it, telling us we must be well when morning came or we could not enjoy the presents Santa Claus would bring, and we had to pretend to want it. We heard her tell father she believed we would have measles or some other fever, and she helped us undress, tucking us in and kissing us tenderly the way mother always does when we do not feel well, and crept up once or twice to see us.

In the intervals we talked sorrowfully of the ordeal before us and nerved ourselves to be pleased when we saw the automobile to carry the doll with pink cheeks and chestnut hair, with eyes that opened and shut, with magnificent silken gown; the drum major's cap, the horn that Little Boy Blue would blow, the dishes for the little mother, the sword and the gun for the fierce pirate, the nodding elephant, the bleating sheep, bats and balls, ships and sleds, books, skates, the theater for our dolls. No one must know we had ever seen them, we would be overjoyed at getting them, we would forget our sorrows and our sins.

morning dawdled. In the delight of expectation the little ones woke early, and mother called us, asking anxiously how we felt. She made us dress, fearful of cold and wondered that we did not beg to go down in our gowns and slippers. We tried to laugh, but could not. Solemnly each one disdressed and fled down the stairs to the joys that might have been ours but for Helen's fateful secret.

We entered the parlor. There about the tree lay the toys, ours at last, but no longer desired by us. It was an effort to touch them. With disappointment on her face, mother tried to make us see their beauties. Once more we tried to be happy, once more we made an effort to overcome the influence of our misdeeds. Then a keener realization of our sins came over us. Some one sobbed, and we one and all turned away, bursting into tears. Mother pleaded, begging to know what was wrong, but we could not tell; we could

not break her heart with our wickedness. We tried to stop weeping, tried to look at the gifts which Santa Claus had brought, but the tears came faster and faster. We buried our heads in our nap and gave way to our grief while Helen wailed: "Oh, mother, I've spoiled Christmas for every one! But we'll never, never play with our presents before Christmas again!"

Mother understood. The tears streamed down her face while she gathered us in her arms. Father said nothing, but, crossing the room, looked out of the window. We sobbed and sobbed until we could sob no longer. Then we dried our tears, and mother put away the toys, for we did not want them. We resumed our pirate life with meek and chastened spirit, ill befitting the ferocious deeds we did, for the pirates had learned a lesson. Never again would they capture a cargo stored by Santa Claus on a rafter shelf, awaiting the glad Christmastide.

ton university, is the first layman to hold that position. He is a native of Virginia and is forty-six years old.

System With a Method.
"I have nearly run my legs off going about a department store making a few purchases for my wife," said the man with the bundles. "I believe that I was directed to six different parts of the establishment for each article I bought. I was sent upstairs, downstairs, across the shop, along the aisle and from one point to another, just as though nobody knew where anything was."

"You evidently don't understand the system," suggested his friend.

"Indeed I don't. If it is a system, it is beyond my understanding," he answered.

"Well, it is a system that is not without method," replied the other. "You did not realize it, but it was a great exhibition of stock for your benefit. It would have been a great deal of trouble to have sent you on one of the revolving stools and brought all of the goods in the store and paraded them in front of you; so you were started off and directed from place to place so as to make a tour of the establishment and get a general view of the goods in each department. Do you see the advertising scheme?"

"I believe that you are right, my boy, for that is the only rational explanation of the proceeding."—New York Herald.

Teak Her Literally.
Elizabeth Cady Stanton was once giving a piece of advice to a roomful of young men in a little village on the subject of matrimony. "When you marry," she said, "choose a woman with a spine and a sound set of teeth."

"Good gracious, Mrs. Stanton," remarked one of her listeners in alarm, "do they ever come without spines?"

Had Spelling.
One of the causes to which the prevalence of bad spelling among the rising generation is attributed is the fact that the modern Roman method of pronouncing Latin gives no direct indication of the pronunciation of the English derivatives and so no cue to their spelling, as the English sound of Latin words did when it was used.

Overheard in the Garden of Eden.
"You are a nasty, mean, horrid old thing, so there!" exclaimed Eve.

"I suppose next you will threaten to go home to mamma," taunted Adam.

Then, realizing the bitterness of nature's handicap, Eve burst into tears.—Philadelphia Record.

The Wife.
"Suppose I were an absolutely perfect woman," she remarked sharply.

"Do you know what you'd do then?"

"No," answered her husband.

"What?"

"You'd growl because you had nothing to growl about."

Very Willing.
"You asked her father for her hand?"

"Yes."

"And he refused you?"

"No, he didn't. He said I could have both of them."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Is One as Bad as the Other?
"Poverty is no disgrace," said the young woman with ideas of her own.

"No," said Mrs. Cramrocks, "it's no disgrace, but it certainly is extremely unfashionable."—Washington Star.

For the Good of the Town.
Charles H. Hackley believes that where a man amasses a fortune there he ought to spend at least a goodly portion of it, and to this end he has given a great number of good things to Muskegon, Mich. No worthy appeal is met with a refusal, and a great deal of money has been given by Mr. Hackley for the good of the town in the way of good roads, donations to worthy charitable institutions, to the town library, to the hospitals, and any individual cases that come up are always aided from his purse of plenty. He is popular with his fellow townsmen, and deservedly so.

President of Princeton University.
Dr. Woodrow Wilson, who was recently inaugurated president of Prince-



ton university, is the first layman to hold that position. He is a native of Virginia and is forty-six years old.

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TOWN BEAUTIFYING.

VALUE OF SHADE TREES TO A COMMUNITY.

The Removal of Ill Looking Fences Greatly Improves the Appearance of a Town—Some Remarks About Street Lighting.

Without trees no town can be beautiful. In summer their shade is refreshing, while the dreariness of winter is rendered less desolate by their presence. And trees have a direct value too. A tree shaded avenue is a much more desirable place of residence than one which lacks the adornment. Property is more valuable on this street, and landlords demand and receive a higher rate of rent. The houses are more pretentious, the lawns are green and smoothly shaven, and beds of flowers and bunches of shrubbery bear witness to the friendly rivalry among the dwellers to excel in the beautiful. A comparatively small outlay will do much to beautify a town. Once planted and properly guarded from destruction, trees require little care and in a few years will amply recompense for trouble and money expended.

The custom of maintaining ill looking fences in front of residences is a foolish one. Remove them and note what a difference. The street has a much broader appearance, the houses appear to have more room, and what is worth considering, an item is taken from the expenses of the householders. Laws are not necessary to do away with the fences. Once the movement is started, they will quickly disappear. The penalties provided in the town ordinance for stray animals is amply sufficient to protect lawn and shrubbery from their depredation.

Of course, in certain localities fences have their uses and are well nigh indispensable. For instance, on the farm they are necessary to keep horses, cows, pigs and other stock from entering the fields which the husbandman has planted with grain and vegetables or to exclude them from prematurely enjoying the harvest of grass in meadow and upland which is destined for their winter sustenance. No such conditions prevail in the town, however, and in the interest of beauty the fences should be relegated to the domain to which they belong.

There is no use or reason for a fence in the streets of a town. In days of yore, when cows and pigs wandered at will through the highways and byways, they were necessary only because the ordinances respecting cattle in the town were not enforced. But times have changed and people no longer tolerate the man who permits his domestic animals to gain a livelihood at the expense of his neighbors' lawns and gardens.

A subject of great importance to the people of a community is the lighting of streets at night. The benefits are many and far outweigh any question of cost or economy. How many accidents that have caused loss of life and limb are due to insufficiently lighted or wholly dark streets! How many crimes have been committed under cover of darkness that would never have been perpetrated had there been light to reveal the robber or assassin to his intended victim! The development of electricity has made it possible to light our streets at night at a small expense. No costly plant is required and the outlay for labor to put up the wires is nominal.

The personal safety and convenience of every citizen demand that the streets shall be so illuminated that he may leave his home after dark without danger of breaking his limbs or having his head smashed by some enterprising footpad.

GOOD ARCHITECTURE.

The Future Erection of Public Buildings and Residences.

A town cannot be rebuilt, but it is not possible to foster such an intelligent interest in good architecture that every new public edifice, factory, store or dwelling erected in the future shall be as good as can be built for the money?

It cannot be too strenuously insisted now that beauty is not a matter of dollars and cents, but of mental quality, says the Springfield (Mass.) Republican. A \$1,500 cottage may have a charm of its own as well as the \$100,000 mansion if only it conforms to its type and does not strive for cheap, pretentious effects, for castle battlements (in painted shingles) and Juliet balconies to which Juliet must climb by a ladder and other shams and absurdities of the romantic minded architect. Nor does the business block require elaborate ornamentation to be beautiful if only its proportions are good, its color rich and its windows well set.

What is done cannot at once be undone, but if the future is looked out for the town will gradually grow into a new beauty, and whenever one of the old buildings yields to the encroachments of time its place will be taken by another more worthy of the twentieth century.

Town Boom Committees.

There are fifteen different towns in southern Michigan where town boom committees of women are appointed

every spring, and the good they have done cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. The business of a town can be left to its men, but the beautifying of it should be in the hands of the women.

Advertise Your Wares.
Local merchants may keep as good wares as the large metropolitan stores, but if they do not advertise this fact they need not be surprised to see their townspeople continue to send out of town for anything unusually good.

Head of Woman's Relief Corps.
The new president of the Woman's Relief Corps, Mrs. Ludusky J. Taylor of Lesueur, Minn., has been a zealous worker for the cause during the eight-



teen years that have elapsed since the organization of the Minnesota State Woman's Relief Corps. Mrs. Taylor is a native of Minnesota and is descended from New England Puritan stock. She is a woman of great executive ability.

Do Fishes Hear?
Did any one ever see a fish's ears? Do fishes have ears? It has been pretty well proved that they hear. Scientists have made up a list of about 100 fishes that make sounds. Why should they make sounds unless they expect to be heard? The drum drums, the puffer croaks. Even the weakfish complains with an internal voice when the cruel fisherman leaves it to die in the bottom of the boat. Possibly fishes hear through their teeth.—New York Press.

Sunflower Seeds as Food.
The sunflower crop is one of the best paying in Russia. A good crop is worth as it stands in the field \$25 an acre. The seeds are sold by the farmer for about \$1.50 a pound; then the merchants salt them and retail them for \$3 a pound, and at every street crossing in Russian provincial cities are stands and peddlers with baskets selling to the passerby the salted product of the big sunflower, which is eaten.

Wanted the Whole Outfit.
A friend once wrote to Mark Twain asking his opinion on a certain matter and received no reply. He waited a few days and then wrote again. His second letter was also ignored. Finally he sent a third note, inclosing a sheet of paper and a two cent stamp. By return post he received a postcard on which was the following: "Paper and stamp received. Please send envelope."

Language of Flowers.
Edith—Do you understand the language of flowers?
Ethel—I do.
Edith—Then what does this bunch of rare orchids that Albert sent me signify?
Ethel—That a fool and his money are soon parted.—Judge.

Unprejudiced.
"But, Judge, you were asleep when the testimony was presented. How can you give a decision?"

"Easily, sir, easily, for no one can accuse me of having been prejudiced by the arguments of either side."—New York Times.

One Better.
Mrs. Witherby—We must give some sort of affair, dear, if only to maintain our position.

Witherby—I suppose you want it to cost as much as possible?

"Oh, more than that!"—Life.

Hit It.
"I hear you are going to marry old Broadacres."
"Yes."
"For land's sake!"
"Yes."—Baltimore American.

The Real Meaning.
"Ennui," said the cynical codger, "is the polite name for laziness. It means doing nothing and too tired to stop."—Baltimore Herald.

Oranges and Influenza.
Oranges are used as a cure for influenza, especially in Florida. Nearly every fruit will purify the blood, partly because of the soft water, which takes up more injurious material in the system than hard water, and partly because of its salts. Lemon is famous for this reason.

In the Course of Time.
I'm going to be a millionaire;
My money I shall hoard it.
I'll be a great reformer then,
Because I can afford it.
—Washington Star.